

What is claimed is:

1. A monitoring apparatus capable of acquiring maintenance information from a plurality of image forming apparatuses to be monitored via a communication line, and capable of communicating with a management apparatus, comprising:

an acquiring device that acquires the maintenance information from the plurality of image forming apparatuses to be monitored; and

a management device that carries out one of management of completion of installation of the monitoring apparatus and central management of completion of operations carried out for the plurality of image forming apparatuses to be monitored.

2. A monitoring apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

said management device comprises an installation completion report generating device that generates an installation completion report including information specifying the monitoring apparatus when installation of the monitoring apparatus is completed; and

the monitoring apparatus further comprises an installation completion report sending device that sends the generated installation completion report to the management apparatus.

3. A monitoring apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the maintenance information acquired from the image forming apparatuses includes information relating to consumable supplies used in the image forming apparatuses, and information relating to failure having 5 occurred in the image forming apparatuses.

4. A monitoring apparatus according to claim 1, comprising:

- a selecting device that selects a predetermined image forming apparatus from among the plurality of 10 image forming apparatuses;
- an operation start report sending device that sends an operation start report relating to the image forming apparatus selected by said selecting device to the management apparatus; and
- 15 an operation completion report sending device that sends an operation completion report relating to the image forming apparatus selected by said selecting device to the management apparatus.

5. A monitoring apparatus according to claim 4, 20 comprising an operating device that carries out operations for the selected image forming apparatus after the operation start report is sent; and wherein said operation completion report sending device generates the operation completion report including 25 contents of the operations carried out by said operating device, and sends the generated operation completion report to the management apparatus.

6. A monitoring apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said operation completion report sending device generates the operation completion report including information identifying the monitoring apparatus.

5 7. A monitoring apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

an operation start report generating device operable when operation for an image forming apparatus selected from the plurality of image forming apparatuses 10 to be subjected to operation are started, to generate an operation start report including information specifying the image forming apparatus subjected to the operation and information indicative of operation starting date and time;

15 an operation start report sending device that sends the operation start report to the management apparatus;

an operation completion report generating device that generates an operation completion report including information capable of being correlated with the 20 operation start report and information indicative of operation completion date and time; and

an operation completion report sending device that sends the operation completion report to the management apparatus.

25 8. A management apparatus capable of communicating with a monitoring apparatus that is capable of acquiring maintenance information from a

plurality of image forming apparatuses to be monitored via a communication line, comprising:

- an installation completion report receiving device that receives an installation completion report
- 5 including information identifying the monitoring apparatus by electronic mail; and
- a normal periodic processing device that identifies the monitoring apparatus having been installed according to the received installation completion report, and
- 10 carries out a normal periodic process for the identified monitoring apparatus.

9. A management apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

- an operation start report receiving device that
- 15 receives an operation start report including information identifying an image forming apparatus subjected to operation, and information indicative of operation starting date and time;
- an operation completion report receiving device
- 20 that receives an operation completion report including information capable of being correlated with the operation start report and information indicative of operation completion date and time; and
- an operation time period recognition device that
- 25 recognizes an operation time period for which operation is carried out for the identified image forming apparatus according to at least one of the operation

start report and the operation completion report.

10. A management apparatus according to claim 8,  
wherein the normal periodic process comprises a process  
in which the monitoring apparatus is periodically  
5 requested to send information acquired from the image  
forming apparatuses to be monitored by the monitoring  
apparatus.

11. A management apparatus according to claim 9,  
further comprising a nullification device operable upon  
10 receipt of the operation start report, to nullify a  
notification of counter information or failure relating  
to the image forming apparatus subjected to operation,  
sent from the monitoring apparatus.

12. A processing method executed by a monitoring  
15 apparatus capable of acquiring maintenance information  
from a plurality of image forming apparatuses to be  
monitored via a communication line, and capable of  
communicating with a management apparatus, comprising:

an acquiring step of acquiring acquires the  
20 maintenance information from the plurality of image  
forming apparatuses to be monitored; and  
a management step of carrying out one of management  
of completion of installation of the monitoring  
apparatus and central management of completion of  
25 operations carried out for the plurality of image  
forming apparatuses to be monitored.

13. A processing method according to claim 12,

wherein:

    said management step comprises an installation completion report generating step of generating an installation completion report including information  
5    specifying the monitoring apparatus when installation of the monitoring apparatus is completed;  
    the processing method further comprises an installation completion report sending step of sending the generated installation completion report to the  
10    management apparatus.

14. A processing method according to claim 12, wherein the maintenance information acquired from the image forming apparatuses includes information relating to consumable supplies used in the image forming  
15    apparatuses, and information relating to failure having occurred in the image forming apparatuses.

15. A processing method according to claim 12, comprising:

    a selecting step of selecting a predetermined image  
20    forming apparatus from among the plurality of image forming apparatuses;

    an operation start report sending step of sending an operation start report relating to the image forming apparatus selected in said selecting step to the  
25    management apparatus; and

    an operation completion report sending step of sending an operation completion report relating to the

image forming apparatus selected in said selecting step to the management apparatus.

16. A processing method according to claim 15, comprising an operating step of carrying out operations for the selected image forming apparatus after the operation start report is sent, and wherein said operation completion report sending step comprises generating the operation completion report including contents of the operations carried out in said operating step, and sending the generated operation completion report to the management apparatus.

17. A processing method according to claim 16, wherein said operation completion report sending step comprises generating the operation completion report including information identifying the monitoring apparatus.

18. A processing method according to claim 12, further comprising:

an operation start report generating step of generating an operation start report including information specifying an image forming apparatus selected from the plurality of image forming apparatuses to be subjected to operation and information indicative of operation starting date and time, when operation for the image forming apparatus selected to be subjected to operation are started;

an operation start report sending step of sending

the operation start report to the management apparatus;

an operation completion report generating step of generating an operation completion report including information capable of being correlated with the

5 operation start report and information indicative of operation completion date and time; and

an operation completion report sending step of sending the operation completion report to the management apparatus.

10 19. A management method executed by a management apparatus capable of communicating with a monitoring apparatus that is capable of acquiring maintenance information from a plurality of image forming apparatuses to be monitored via a communication line,

15 comprising:

an installation completion report receiving step of receiving an installation completion report including information identifying the monitoring apparatus by electronic mail; and

20 a normal periodic processing step of identifying the monitoring apparatus having been installed according to the received installation completion report, and carrying out a normal periodic process for the identified monitoring apparatus.

25 20. A management apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising:

an operation start report receiving step of

receiving an operation start report including information identifying an image forming apparatus subjected to operation, and information indicative of operation starting date and time;

5       an operation completion report receiving step of receiving an operation completion report including information capable of being correlated with the operation start report and information indicative of operation completion date and time; and

10      an operation time period recognition step of recognizing an operation time period for which operation is carried out for the identified image forming apparatus according to at least one of the operation start report and the operation completion report.

15      21. A management apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the normal periodic process comprises a process in which the monitoring apparatus is periodically requested to send information acquired from the image forming apparatuses to be monitored by the monitoring apparatus.

20      22. A management apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising a nullification step of nullifying a notification of counter information or failure relating to the image forming apparatus subjected to operation,

25      sent from the monitoring apparatus upon receipt of the operation start report.

23. A program for causing a computer to execute a

processing method by a monitoring apparatus capable of acquiring maintenance information from a plurality of image forming apparatuses to be monitored via a communication line, and capable of communicating with a 5 management apparatus, comprising:

- an acquiring module for acquiring acquires the maintenance information from the plurality of image forming apparatuses to be monitored; and
- 10 a management module for carrying out one of management of completion of installation of the monitoring apparatus and central management of completion of operations carried out for the plurality of image forming apparatuses to be monitored.

24. A program for causing a computer to execute a 15 processing method by a monitoring apparatus capable of acquiring maintenance information from a plurality of image forming apparatuses to be monitored via a communication line, and capable of communicating with a management apparatus, comprising:

- 20 an installation completion report receiving module for receiving an installation completion report including information identifying the monitoring apparatus by electronic mail; and
- 25 a normal periodic processing module for identifying the monitoring apparatus having been installed according to the received installation completion report, and carrying out a normal periodic process for the

identified monitoring apparatus.